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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/657,917	09/08/2000	David Matthew Smith	DMS2K001	2508

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EXAMINER

FOSTER, ROLAND G

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2645

DATE MAILED: 10/01/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/657,917

Applicant(s)

SMITH, DAVID MATTHEW

Examiner

Roland G. Foster

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 September 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-8, 10-12, 14, 16-17, and 19-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 2,9,13,15 and 18 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1, 3-8, 10-12, 14, 16, 17, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent

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No. 5,668,955 to deCiutiis et al. ("deCiutiis") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,898,756 to Manning et al. ("Manning").

With respect to claim 1, see the following paragraphs for details on how Manning anticipates certain limitations within the claim.

The limitation "receiving a first digit by said automatic dialing device from a telephone...." reads on Manning as follows. A first digit is received (Fig. 2B-1, "1st digit dialed?") by the series connected automated dialer (Fig. 1-1) received from a telephone (Fig. 1-1, subscriber's telephone set 4).

The limitation "decoding a digit value of said first digit" reads on Figs. 2B-1, "1st DIGIT=1".

The limitation "waiting for a predetermined digit interval of time for reception of a subsequently received second digit from said telephone network" reads on Fig. 2B-2 where the dialer "wait[s] for the next digit" (i.e., waits a predetermined amount of time necessary to determine that no subsequent digit has been received).

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The limitation "automatically dialing onto said telephone network a predetermined access network digit or strings of digits if said predetermined digit interval of time is elapsed prior to reception of said second digit" reads deCiutiis as follows. The system "wait[s] for next digit" for a amount of time until on the system determines whether the "digit [was] dialed, y/n." If no, then the system skips to the exception checking step and eventually to the dialing step where the access code is dialed.

The limitation "such that said digit access digit or string of digits is automatically dialed following completion of the first received digits and prior to reception of subsequently received digits" reads on Fig. 2B-2, "transmit access code" and col. 16, lines 1-5 where the access code is inserted into the dialed telephone number.

DeCiutiis discloses a series connected, auto-dialer (Fig. 1-1), and thus fails to disclose that the first digits are received via a "telephone network."

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However, Manning (similarly to deCiutiis) teaches of a auto-dialer capable of inserting an access code into the dialing sequence (abstract) that is also connected in parallel to the subscriber line (telephone network)¹ (abstract and Fig. 1) and thus is capable of receiving the digits via the telephone network.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add the parallel connection arrangement as taught by the auto-dialer capable of inserting an access code codes into the dialing sequence to the serially connected, auto-dialer capable of inserting an access code into the dialing sequence as disclosed by DeCiutiis.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been to decrease the ease of installation because the "principle downside of serial-connected speed dialers is the difficulty of installation" (Manning, col. 1 lines 29-50). In addition, the parallel connected arrangement of Manning "provides[s] for transparency to the user" (Manning, col. 2, line 20-60).

¹ Equating the subscriber line to the telephone network is consistent with the applicant's specification (e.g., Fig. 1A).

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Claim 8 differs substantively from claim 1 in that claim 8 recites a computer program implemented by a processor that performs functions equivalent to the method steps of claim 1. The processor reads on the microcontroller (Fig. 1-2).

Claim 14 differs substantively from claim 1 in that claim 14 recites a device comprising components that perform functions equivalent to the method steps of claim 1. The "parallel telephone connection" reads on Manning, abstract and Fig. 1 and was added in the claim 1 rejection above. The "digit detector" reads on deCiutiis, Fig. 1-1, DTMF decode 15. The digit transmitter" reads on deCiutiis, DTMF generator 13.

With respect to claim 3, see the claim 1 rejection for details regarding the parallel connection.

With respect to claims 4, 10, and 20, see deCiutiis, Fig. 2A-1 where the off-hook or ring awakens the system by applying power.

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With respect to claims 5 and 11, see deCiutiis, Fig. 2B-1 where a "0" is entered which disable transmission of stored digits.

With respect to claims 6 and 12, see deCiutiis, Fig. 2B-1 where the system turns off.

With respect to claims 7 and 16, if the second digit is part of the exception code (Fig. 2B-2), then the system will not dial an access code and then turn off (Fig. 2B-1).

With respect to claim 17, see Fig. 2A-1, "power up."

With respect to claim 19, see Fig. 2B-1 regarding power down.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2, 9, 13, 15, and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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Examiner's Reasons for Allowance

Claims 2, 9, and 15 are directed to measuring the duration of the first digit and aborting automatic dialing of the access number if the duration exceeds a predetermined maximum value.

The prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the obviousness of adding this unusual and specific feature to the specific field of automatic dialers capable of inserting access codes.

The above reasons for allowance are based on the claims as presently set forth in their totality. The above reasons for allowance should not be interpreted as indicating that amended claims broadly reciting certain limitations discussed in the above reasons for allowance would be allowable. A more detailed reasons for allowance may be set forth in a subsequent Notice of Allowance if and when all claims in the application are put into a condition for allowance.

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Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Roland Foster whose telephone number is (703) 305-1491. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Fan S. Tsang, can be reached on (703) 305-4895. The fax phone number for this group is (703) 872-9314.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to customer service whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.



Roland G. Foster
Patent Examiner
September 20, 2003